United Nations A/63/705-S/2009/73

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
5 February 2009

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-third session
Agenda items 15, 16, 29 and 65 (c)

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: assistance to the Palestinian people

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Letter dated 4 February 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter dated 22 January 2009, I have the pleasure to attach herewith the letter received from Mme. Suzanne Mubarak, the First Lady of Egypt and the President of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society (ERCS), addressed to you, regarding Egypt's efforts to alleviate the grave humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip resulting from the Israeli aggression (see annex).

I would appreciate if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 15, 16, 29 and 65 (c), of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and of the Security Council, under the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine".

(*Signed*) Maged A. **Abdelaziz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

09-22983 (E) 170209

Annex to the letter dated 4 February 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like, at the outset, to express my appreciation for the frank discussions and valuable exchange of views we had during our meeting on 14 January 2009 regarding the grave and deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Occupied Gaza Strip resulting from the continuing Israeli aggression.

As we discussed, I, in my capacity as the president of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society (ERCS), called for an urgent meeting on 10 January 2009 with relevant United Nations agencies, in order to address the various aspects of the humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people in Gaza, and to establish enhanced coordination to facilitate immediate, effective and sustained delivery of food and medical assistance.

At the meeting it was agreed to establish the Emergency Committee for the Coordination of Assistance (ECCA) to Gaza, aiming at harmonizing the activities of all actors in the field of humanitarian assistance and efficiently responding to the real needs of the Palestinian people. I am enclosing herewith for your attention the terms of reference of the aforementioned committee, which is scheduled to begin to operate promptly (see attachment).

Furthermore, while many have stepped forward to provide aid to the Palestinians in this time of distress, you might agree that such efforts as well as initiatives need to be better coordinated. The United Nations stands at the heart of such endeavour. As I underscored in our meeting on 14 January, I firmly believe that the United Nations has an essential role to play in leading the global efforts to mobilize the urgently needed additional resources for the provision of humanitarian assistance for the Palestinians.

It is, therefore, my hope that you will undertake this fundamental task by calling for a high-level meeting for the donor community to convene as soon as possible in order to respond to this dire humanitarian situation, through providing the United Nations family with the appropriate means to alleviate the human suffering in Gaza.

I am confident that you will spare no effort in realizing this proposal.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your leadership and the extraordinary work of all United Nations humanitarian personnel, for their dedication and tireless efforts. I would like to pay tribute to all those who have lost their lives in performing their responsibilities towards the Palestinian civilian population during this crisis.

(*Signed*) Suzanne **Mubarak**

Attachment

Terms of reference of the Emergency Committee for the Coordination of Assistance to Gaza

At the initiative of Suzanne Mubarak, the First Lady of the Arab Republic of Egypt, in her capacity as President of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, a meeting of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society with the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes was held on 10 January 2009, in Cairo.

The meeting endorsed the proposal of the First Lady to establish the Emergency Committee for the Coordination of Assistance (ECCA) to the Palestinian population in occupied Gaza Strip.

Objectives:

The objectives of the Emergency Committee for the Coordination of Assistance include:

1. Coordinating all multilateral and bilateral humanitarian assistance directed to Gaza through Egypt, ensuring that the assistance reflects the priorities of the Palestinian people, as outlined by the various United Nations agencies concerned in collaboration with the Palestinian Red Crescent.

2. Coordinating with the concerned parties the effective, unimpeded and sustained delivery of such assistance.

3. Collaborating in the area of information exchange regarding the humanitarian situation in the field as well as the efforts by various actors to avoid duplication and redundancies.

Location and composition:

The Emergency Committee for the Coordination of Assistance will be located in Cairo (the headquarters of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society), with a field presence at Al-Arish.

The Emergency Committee for the Coordination of Assistance will be composed of representatives of:

1. The Egyptian Red Crescent Society (Chair)

2. United Nations agencies, including:

   - United Nations Resident Coordinator (Egypt)
   - World Food Programme (WFP)
   - World Health Organization (WHO)
   - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
   - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
   - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

3. Relevant Egyptian authorities

4. The Palestinian Red Crescent

The field presence of the Emergency Committee for the Coordination of Assistance will be composed of representatives of:

- The Egyptian Red Crescent Society
- United Nations Resident Coordinator (Egypt)
- WFP
- WHO
- Governorate of Northern Sinai
- Relevant Egyptian authorities
- Palestinian Red Crescent

The Emergency Committee for the Coordination of Assistance will hold periodic meetings to exchange views on the developments pertaining to the delivery of assistance.